



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Shawn Etcher
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

September 8, 2008

Subject: NYC08FA307

Persons at location of discussion: Rick Schimpf co-owner, Don Edwards, Robert Fus (Federal Aviation Administration), Shawn Etcher (self)

The information was obtained over a period of time at the accident location. Mr. Schimpf volunteered the below information.

He stated at the accident location while discussing how the balloon works and how it is used, that the basket has three (3) tanks, two (2) stainless steel tanks, and another tank that is used for inflation of the balloon. He further volunteered that even though the basket did not come with the third tank they utilize it as the balloon is inflated. Once the balloon is inflated there was always fuel left, their company policy is that they would rather have the tank on board in case they needed that remaining fuel to help the balloon reach a safe landing location. He further volunteered that the extra tank is shorter than the surrounding two (2) stainless steel tanks so in order to assist the pilot they placed a "piece of plywood on top of a milk crate." This allowed the tank to be raised to an almost level height as the two (2) surrounding tanks.

When asked how an additional tank was allowed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) he stated that the only times they have been examined by the FAA was sometimes at a balloon fest, he further stated that they "hardly ever see the FAA."

When asked about weather and weight and balance information Mr. Schimpf stated Air Ventures is operated under part 91 they have no record of the weather or the passenger's weight. Weight and balance is not accomplished due to the fact "The basket was bought to be able to handle a range of weights and never be overweight."